

(p. 193), 'charming confidence that animals in a sanctuary often develop towards humanity' (p. 212), the list is endless as the book is full of such unforgettable sentences. Writing about the antics of the members of the Indian Board for Wildlife during the discussion on commercial exploitation of captive crocodiles in his article 'Captive-bred mugger (p. 193-195), he writes "I could not argue the point... as by that time people were getting visibly restive. The aroma of lunch, being laid out in the next room pervaded the air, and as an experienced ethologist I knew how futile, even dangerous at times, gustatory arousal and its consummation."

To modify Orwell, all articles are good, but some are better than others. My favourites

are: 'The Hawk' (pp 35-36) about the two Egyptian vultures which come daily to Tirukkalukunram, near Mahabalipuram, which shows Krishnan's sense of humour, and 'Ecological patriotism' (pp 250-255). The latter, I think, should be compulsory reading for all conservationists and forest officers. Reading this article I found that, like 35 years ago, when I used to sit with a dictionary to comprehend M. Krishnan's writing, I still had to use a dictionary to understand words such as 'desideratum' (p. 251) which means something wanted or needed. Do I need to write more about the value of this book?

■ ASAD R. RAHMANI

3. FISH FAUNA OF MANIPUR, by W. Vishwanath. Manipur Association for Science & Society (MASS), Imphal. Published in 2000. Pp. viii + 143, 6 plates. (21 x 13.5 cm), price Rs. 100/- or \$ 6; library edition price Rs. 350/- or \$ 10.

In the last two decades, there has been a spate of books on Indian fish taxonomy. While these dealt with fishes from all over India — and even neighbouring countries — there is a new star on the horizon. The 'Seven Sisters', as our northeastern states are known, are a far cry from the national mainstream, what with vast distances, logistic constraints and a beautifully quaint culture. It was, therefore, a surprise to me to come across one of the best written treatises on fish taxonomy from one of these distant states, namely Manipur. The excellent work is by Dr. W. Vishwanath, a protégé of Dr. K.C. Jayaram, who is himself the author of two outstanding fish books. May their tribe increase and flourish!

This compact booklet — it has 143 pages — covers 167 species. Manipur, though politically a part of India, borders on Myanmar (Burma) and has the advantage of having an admixture of typically Indian fish fauna in its Barak-Brahmaputra drainage in its western half

and the Imphal-Chindwin drainage in its eastern half. Thus, many of its fishes, though known in Myanmar, are the basis of new geographic records from India.

The book starts with brief but necessary notes on Manipur's geomorphology, water resources, biogeography and history of fish taxonomy in the region. Although Manipur is considered a 'developing' state, the author has consulted the latest taxonomic classifications of Eschmeyer (1990), Kottelat (1990), Rainboth (1991), Nelson (1994), Banarescu & Nalbant (1995) and Banarescu & Herzig-Straschil (1995), so that the classification in the book is up to date.

Vishwanath has taken great care to go through the proofs for the main section (page 26 onwards); I could locate only one mistake on page 47 where "paired fish lateral" is given (It should be "paired fins lateral"). However, it is in the general coverage, and more so the Systematic Index (S.I.) where he has slipped up badly. Thus, page 10 has as many as five spelling errors in the

technical names, namely Coelacanthimorpha instead of Coelacanthimorpha, Tetrapods (should be Tetrapoda), Chimaeriform(e)s (e missing), Rajiform(e)s (e missing), Coelac(a)nthiformes (a missing); on page 11 Sc(h)ilbeinae (h missing). On page 12, the Family Nandidae is wrongly shown as an Order, Cic(h)lidae (h missing) and Anbantidae (should be Anabantidae); on page 13 standard length, dorsal fin length (instead of length); on page 21 *berdmorrei* (only one 'r'); on page 22 Tros(c)hel (c missing); on page 23 *N. viridescens* (should be *viridiscens*), *H. fossilis* bloch (instead of Bloch), Exocoetoidei (should be Exocoetoidei). On page 23, the Suborder Belonidei is wrongly given as Belonidae. On page 24, *Johnius* Blochl ('l' is superfluous, also the subfamilies Badinae and Nandinae are wrongly given as Badidae and Nandidae, Family Cichlidae is wrongly spelt as Chiclidae, while on page 125 it is spelt Ciclidae.

The top lines on many pages in the Systematic Index are missing, e.g., Subfamily Cobitinae (p. 85), *Lepidocephalus guntea* (Ham.-Buch.) (p. 88), Subfamily Bagrinae (p. 90),

*Mystus bleekeri* (Day) (p. 93), Suborder Beloidei (p. 113), Subfamily Apocheilinae (p. 114), Subfamily Mastacembelinae (p. 117), Suborder Tetraodontoidei (p. 133) and Subfamily Tetraodontinae (p. 133).

There are many slips in the pagination too. Thus, *C. chitala* is shown in the Systematic Index (S.I.) as on page 28, whereas it is actually on page 29. Similar errors are: genus *Aorichthys* Wu (S.I. page 91, actually 90); *A. aor* (Ham.-Buch.), genus *Batasio* Blyth and *B. tengara* (Ham.-Buch.) (S.I. 92, actually 91), Family Siluridae (S.I. 94, actually 93), genus *Wallagoi* Bleeker (S.I. 96, actually 95).

But these errors and aberrations are only minor irritants and do not detract from the otherwise excellent publication. Accurate line drawings are given for each genus so as to acquaint the novice of the shape of the fish. Photographs are also given of 66 representative fishes. The price for the library edition is rather stiff, at Rs. 350/-.

■ B.F. CHHAPGAR

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